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ABSTRACT

Thirty-three teacher behaviors previously identified as characteristic of teachers effective with mainstreamed students were examined for their effects on peer acceptance of the mainstreamed students. Elementary teachers (N=118) participated. Classroom observations were recorded and a group test of peer acceptance was administered. Correlational analyses were conducted controlling for length of time mainstreamed, hours of services provided, and sex. Results indicated that of the 33 teaching variables considered, only three correlated significantly with peer acceptance. Sustaining feedback, providing followup to students who give incorrect answers, was positively correlated to peer acceptance, while criticizing incorrect responses was negatively related. A high amount of teacher transition, or noninstructional time, was also related to low peer acceptance. Findings emphasized the importance of corrective, noncritical feedback. (CL)

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Classroom Teaching Behaviors Which Predict Peer Acceptance of Mainstreamed Students

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The purpose of this study was to identify which dimensions of teaching are related to the peer acceptance of mainstreamed students. Variables considered represented those that had been found to consistently relate to student performance outcomes based on previous process-product research findings. The findings reported here are part of a large three-year research grant funded to identify specific teaching behaviors which predict success for mainstreamed students in the regular classroom setting.

PROCEDURE

In an earlier phase of this study, 42 teaching behaviors were determined to be characteristic of teachers effective with mainstreamed students. These results were based on extensive study of the classrooms of 12 carefully selected teachers who had demonstrated their effectiveness with mainstreamed students. For this phase of the study, budgetary and time constraints prohibited the inclusion of all of the identified variables. In an attempt to limit the hours of observation required as well as teacher time necessary for completion of project instruments and questionnaires, 33 of the previously identified variables were considered for this analysis. A variable list with the corresponding data collection instrument is given in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

Instrumentation

Direct classroom observation and teacher self-report modes of data collection were implemented to provide the data necessary for assessing all of the selected teacher variables. Classroom observations were conducted between January and May. The observation scheme included the coding of four instruments: Academic Learning Time (ALT), Questioning Pattern (QP), Intervention Strategy Record (ISR), and Observer Rating Scale (ORS). Each instrument was recorded on four occasions for each teacher. Table 1 provides specific information on the amount of coding time for each instrument. Additionally, the

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Insert Table 1 About Here

Intervention Strategy Inventory (ISI), a teacher self-report instrument, was used to supplement data from the Intervention Strategy Record (ISR). It consisted of 44 classroom situations for which the teacher chose one of four interventions presented.

In order to assess peer acceptance, the Perception of Social Closeness Scale was group-administered to the class while the mainstreamed student was present. The format required that each student make a judgement for every student in his or her class about the level of acceptance they felt toward each of their classmates. All responses for an individual mainstreamed student were considered collectively to arrive at a score. The five response options ranged from "would like to invite to my home" to "would like to leave me alone."

The rating scale sociometric technique was selected over the peer nomination method because evaluations are obtained for all students in the class, as opposed to the nomination procedure which yields only information about how children feel toward those peers they nominate. This is an important advantage in the assessment of social status of handicapped children in that the peer nomination literature clearly indicates that such children are not likely to be chosen on a positive nomination measure. Additionally, the nomination technique essentially assesses best friendship, while the rating scale procedure assesses a more general acceptance dimension.

Teacher Sample

Ultimately 118 teachers completed their participation in the project. Project participation involved classroom observations and completion of a variety of data gathering instruments. A small stipend was offered as well as feedback based on the data collected. Participating teachers taught in public elementary schools in kindergarten through grade six. Sixty-two teachers taught in the primary grades and 56 taught in grades four through six. The mean number of years teaching was 15 years with an average of five years experience working with special needs students. The sample teachers had had a mean of 2.4 courses in special education and approximately half had masters degrees.

Sixty-eight percent of the teacher sample reported having at least three students with an Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.); 35 percent of the sample had more than four students in their class-

rooms with I.E.P.s. The participating teachers represented 30 schools and seven communities.

Mainstreamed Student Sample

Participating teachers were initially asked to complete forms providing specific information on their mainstreamed students. For the purposes of this study, mainstreamed students were defined as those students who had an Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.) and spent any time in a regular classroom. Teachers were to indicate the portion of the day each student was mainstreamed and the subject area(s). They also listed the type of special services provided, such as special class placement, resource-room program, speech and language, etc. From these data sheets a single student was selected to be "tracked" in each classroom.

Data were compiled for all mainstreamed students and classification categories were determined based on the type of services received and amount of time spent in the regular classroom. The mainstreamed student sample was then randomly selected to represent these categories proportionately. The descriptive breakdown for the final mainstreamed student sample is provided in Table 2. The majority

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Insert Table 2 About Here

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of the students in the sample were primarily classified as learning disabled (93 of 118). Three were behaviorally disordered, 17 were speech impaired, and one mainstreamed student was hearing impaired.

RESULTS

In order to determine the degree of relationship between each teaching variable and peer acceptance, a partial correlation analysis was conducted controlling for length of time mainstreamed, hours of services provided, and sex. Results indicated that of the 33 teaching variables considered, only three significantly correlated with peer acceptance. The first variable was labeled "sustaining feedback." This variable is defined as providing follow-up to students who give incorrect answers by asking another clarifying or helping question of the student. This variable was positively related to peer acceptance of mainstreamed students. Likewise, criticizing incorrect student responses was negatively related to peer acceptance. A high amount of teacher transition time, defined as non-instructional time when students are awaiting direction from the teacher, was also related to low peer acceptance. This finding is not readily interpreted.

These results seem to indicate that the feedback which students receive from the teacher may affect their acceptance of others. That is, in classrooms where students receive corrective, non-critical feedback, an atmosphere is created which is more conducive to acceptance of mainstreamed students.

Figure 1

Project Variable List

Instrument	Variable
Questioning Patterns	Content Questions
	Low-order Questions
	Correct Student Response
	Criticism of Response
	Positive Feedback
	Sustaining Feedback
Academic Learning Time	Teacher Transition Time
	Student Transition Time
	Waiting for Help Time
	Off-Task Time
	Easy Difficulty Level
	Hard Difficulty Level
	Engagement Rate
	Academic Learning Time
Intervention Strategy Record	Task Engagement Feedback
	Incidence of Intervention
	Punitive Intervention
Observer Rating Scale	Instructional Appropriateness
	Teacher Responsiveness
	Teacher Fairness
	Performance Expectation
	Relationship with Students
	Initiation of Student Contact
	Efficient Use of Time
	Need for Discipline
	Teacher Clarity
	Active Involvement
Intervention Strategy Inventory	Total Supportive Response
	Supportive Response to Learning Problems
	Supportive Response to Personality Problems
	Supportive Response to Low Ability Students
	Variety of Interventions
	Total Punitive Response

Table 1

Data Collection Schedule for Classroom Observations

Instrument	Length of Each Observation (in minutes)	Number of Observations	Total Time (in minutes)
Questioning Pattern (QP)	15	4	60
Intervention Strategy Record (ISR)	42	4	168
Academic Learning Time (ALT)	45	4	180
Observer Rating Scale (ORS)	60	4	240

Table 2

Description of Services for the Mainstreamed Student Sample (n = 118)

Placement and Services Provided	Number of Students
Placed in a self-contained special education class and mainstreamed into a regular classroom	13
Placed in a regular classroom and provided services in a resource room program	60
Placed in a regular classroom and provided with both resource room and speech and language services	15
Placed in a regular classroom and receiving only speech and language services	21
Placed in a regular classroom and receiving no direct services for academic subjects	5
In referral process but currently receiving no services (no I.E.P. as yet)	4